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TOTNES

RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF

Mr. Henry Sandford Johnson,

Medical Officer of Health,

FOR THE YEAR 1905.

TOTNES:

Printed at the "Times" and "Western Guardian" Offices.

TO THE

TOTNES

Rural District Council.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,

For the year ending December 31st, 1905.

Gentlemen,—I have again the pleasure of laying my annual report before you, and in it you will find, as usual, a resume of the general health of the District, the number of zymotic diseases reported; also the number of births and deaths, as well as the principal works carried out during the year.

The district is, as you are aware, divided into two sub-districts, for the convenience of carrying out the sanitary work. No. 1 sub-distroct, of which Mr. Tollit is the Sanitary Inspector, comprises the parishes of Ashprington, Berry Pomeroy, Churston Ferrers, Cornworthy, Dittisham, Dartington, Halwell, Harberton, Morley, Marldon, Littlehempston, Kingswear, and Stoke-Gabriel, the population of the combined parishes being 7,721, and the acreage 32,231 acres. No. 2 District, of which Mr. Ellis is the Sanitary Inspector, comprises the parishes of Buckfastleigh (West), Diptford Dean Prior, Holne, Rattery, North Huish, Staverton, South Brent, and Ugborough. In the latter parish is situated the Plymouth Borough Asylum, which I take as a separate district. The population of the combined parishes is 5,127, and the acreage 44,750 acres, and the population of the Plymouth Borough Asylum is 333. The combined population of the two districts is 11,848, and the combined acreage 76,961 acres.

BIRTHS.—During the year the births of 275 children were registered, 147 males and 128 females. I append the number in each registration district:—

	Males.	Females.
Ugborough	45	38
Harberton	35	34
Buckfastleigh (West)	23	14
Paignton Rural	20	15
Dartmouth Rural	11	11
Brixham Rural	5	4
Totnes Rural	8	12

These figures shew an increase over 1904, when the number of births was 259.

DEATHS.—During the year there were registered 153 deaths, exclusive of Plymouth Borough Asylum where 19 deaths occurred. These figures give a death rate of 12.9 per 1,000 of the population. I append the death rate for the last five years.

1904	14	per 1,000
1903	12.3	,,
1902	12.2	,,
1901	12.5	,,
1900	12.6	,,

It will thus been seen that the death rate is about the average of previous years. The death rate in Plymouth Borough Asylum is 57 per 1,000, which is less than the previous year, when it was 66.3. Of the deaths registered 75 were males and 78 were females in the Totnes Rural District, whilst in the Plymouth Borough Asylum five were males and fourteen females. I append the number of deaths in each registration district, exclusive of the Plymouth Borough Asylum, in the Ugborough District:

	Males.	Females.
Ugborough	16	30
Harberton	18	30
Buckfastleigh (West)	18	5
Dartmouth Rural	9	12
Paignton Rural	4	9
Brixham Rural	2	5
Totnes Rural	8	6

Comparing the number of births with the deaths, gives a natural increase of 122. Under the first year 25 deaths were registered, from the 1st to the 5th year 8, from the 5th to the 15th year 14, from the 15th to the 25th year 1, from the 25th to the

65th year 48, from the 65th year upwards 57, several of whom exceeded the 80th year.

The deaths were classified as follows:—Measles 2, scarlet fever 4, whooping cough 2, diphtheria 2, epidemic influenza 1, diarrhœa 1, enteritis 1, phthisis pulmenalis, 8, other tubercular diseases 5, cancer 8, bronchitis 13, pneumonia 5, venereal diseases 1, premature birth 5,diseases and accidents of parturition 4, heart disease 25, accidents 5, suicides 1, whilst from all other diseases 60 died. The deaths in the Plymouth Borough Asylum were classified as follows:—Phthisis pulmonalis 2, other tubercular diseases 1, cancer 3, cirrhosis of liver 1,heart disease 2, all other diseases 10. There are two points in the above statement which are a marked improvement on the year 1904, and they are the greatly reduced death rate from cancer, and the diminution of deaths under 1 year. In 1904 cancer claimed 19, whilst in 1905 only eight were recorded; likewise in 1904 34 deaths were recorded of children under the age of one year; in 1905 only 25. I will admit that the latter figures are far too high, but it is an improvement, and I have no doubt that very many of the deaths occur through improper feeding and the want of proper knowledge of those in charge of the infants, as well as from the tendency of many mothers to bottle feed their children instead of properly suckling them.

NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES ACT.—Under the above Act 50 cases were reported during the year, which is 11 more than 1904, when 39 were notified. The cases were classified as follows:—Smallpox 6, diphtheria 11, erysipelas 7, scarlet fever 25, enteric fever 1. The small-pox cases were confined to the parish of Holne on the Moor, at which the Paignton Urban Council are constructing large water works. The first case was an imported one. A navvy arrived from Langport Railway Works with the disease on him, and went to reside in what is known as No. 3 Hut, and the subsequent cases that occurred were among the men who were resident in that hut. Owing to the precautions taken, which consisted in isolating the other occupants of the infected hut in tents on the Moor, and treating the cases themselves in tents a long distance away from the water works, the

disease was prevented from spreading, which was exceedingly fortunate, considering the large number of men employed on the works. Of the 11 cases of diphtheria, one occurred at Paignton Waterworks, in the parish of Holne, and was a mild one, being imported. Another case at Stoke Gabriel was, no doubt, the result of bad drains. The remaining nine cases occurred at the hamlet of Landscove, in the parish of Staverton. The first case occurred in a very delicate child, who had been subject to bad throat, and the disease made its appearance insidiously, and was not recognised at first, and I have no doubt but that the other cases were contact ones, although every possible precaution was taken to prevent its spread. I regret to record that two deaths occurred. The cases of scarlet fever were spread over both districts, and never assumed an epidemic form. The erysipelas cases were of a mild type, and the only case of enteric fever notified, was undoubtedly an imported one, the person being brought from another district whilst suffering from the disease. All cases, on receipt of notice, were immediately visited, and directions given as to the necessary precautions to be taken. There was no outbreak of influenza during the year.

SCHOOLS.—It was found necessary during the year to close the Schools at Harberton, Dittisham, and Galmpton, owing to epidemics of measles, at Rattery owing to whooping cough, and at Landscove owing to diphtheria.

DAIRIES have been regularly inspected, and as a rule have been found clean, and in a sanitary condition. Some slight defects have been observed, but they were remedied on service of the usual notice.

COW HOUSES have been regularly visited. It was found necessary in some few instances to complain of the condition of the floors and drainage, but as a rule they were found in a sanitary condition.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES have received special attention, and with very few exceptions they were found clean and well ventilated.

WATER SUPPLY.—Notwithstanding such an extremely dry summer the water supply to the district has held out very well. No doubt, some of the villages suffered in this respect,but on the whole there was not much to complain of. The rainfall during the year was much lower than in previous years. In one part of the district which adjoins Dartmoor, it was 52.19in., whilst in the other part which adjoins the sea, it was only 34.07in., which shows a considerable difference in the two portions of the district. The greatest rainfall was in the months of March and November, when 9.66in. and 10.88in. respectively fell, and the least rainfall was in May and July, when 1.19in. and 1.25in. respectively fell.

The following improvements have been carried out, also some suggested requisite work:—

No. 1 DISTRICT has not had much sanitary work carried out, the principal being:

DITTISHAM.—Sewer on foreshore extended. Main sewer as recommended in my last annual report ought to be extended to the top of Manor Street.

HARBERTON.—A scheme for thoroughly sewering the whole of the village is under consideration, and I strongly recommend its being carried out.

MORLEY.—Water supply extended and brought nearer the village.

CORNWORTHY.—Increased water supply to village in course of construction.

MARLDON is still waiting for the completion of Paignton Water scheme for its increased water supply.

No. 2 DISTRICT.—A considerable amount of useful work has been done in this district, the principal being DEAN PRIOR, a new water supply to the hamlet of Dean Church Town, which supplies a long felt want.

DIPTFORD.—Water supply to Schools ought to be carried out.

NORTH HUISH.—Water supply improved.

STAVERTON.—Closets to Schools improved. A new public sewer to village is much required and is under consideration. A new system of sewerage for the hamlet of LANDSCOVE is necessary and is also under consideration; both of these improvements will, I have no doubt, be shortly carried out.

SOUTH BRENT has had a considerable amount of work carried out, the chief being a new water supply from a spring in Lutton Valley, which is good and abundant and ought to be sufficient for the wants of this growing health resort for many years. It is proposed to extend this water supply 350 yards, so as to supply some houses which are at present without an adequate supply. New drains have been laid in several parts of the town, the County Council Schools have had a complete new system of sewerage constructed.

UGBOROUGH.—The new sewer at the North East side of the village has been commenced, but owing to objections by the Agent of the property lower down has been stopped, so that at present the matter is in abeyance. Two new sewers have been laid in the Square and houses connected therewith. An increased water supply to the village is under consideration.

BITTAFORD BRIDGE.—A new sewer is required for this repidly growing hamlet, and is under consideration by the Council. FILHAM water supply has been improved. AVONWICK has had new school premises provided with suitable sanitary arrangements in place of premises it was found necessary to condemn as unsuitable.

In addition to the above several minor improvements have been carried out in each sub-district. These principally consist of the erection of new closets, the improvement of insanitary ones, the abolition of insanitary pigs' houses, of new drains being constructed and condition.

Several cases of over crowding received attention, but on receipt of the usual notice were abated.

The applications for the usual certificates for the occupation of many new houses were received, and it was only found necessary in a few cases to with-

hold the granting of them until some further sanitary work was carried out. It was found necessary in two cases to condemn houses as unfit for human occupation.

PROSECUTIONS.—It was only found necessary in one instance to resort to legal proceedings for insanitary drain and yard. An order for the necessary work to be carried out was obtained from the Magistrates.

MIDWIVES' ACT has not been adopted by the Council, and so far the County Council have made no arrangements for carrying out the Act in the district of this Council.

I have tested many samples of water during the year, but did not find it necessary to condemn any.

Disinfectants have been freely distributed during the year.

I have, in company with the Sanitary Inspectors, regularly visited every parish in the District, and have always reported to the Council any matter requiring their attention.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS ACT.—These have been kept under observation, but it has not been found necessary in any case to find fault with them.

The Sanitary Inspectors have carried out their duties in a satisfactory manner.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

Henry S Johnson

Medical Officer of Health.

Totnes, March 4th, 1906.